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MONTANA ELEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, FLATHEAD COUNTY

In re: Lost Coon Lake

Cause No. _____

PETITION FOR CHANGE OF
WATERCOURSE NAME

The City of Whitefish ("the City"), on behalf of the property owners designated in Exhibit C, attached hereto, hereby submits this Petition for Change of Watercourse Name pursuant to §§ 85-2-131 through 134, MCA.

The lake that is the subject of this Petition is described as follows:

An approximately 61-acre lake located to the south of the City of Whitefish and to the northeast of Blanchard Lake in Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 22 West and Section 35, Township 31 North, Range 22 West.

The lake is located wholly within Flathead County and partially within City limits.

The present name of the lake that is the subject of this Petition is "Lost Coon Lake." The City, on behalf of the property owners designated in Exhibit C, requests that the name of the lake be changed to "Lost Loon Lake."

According to Wikipedia, in partial reliance upon "Stump Town to Ski Town," a book about the history of Whitefish, Lost Coon Lake was originally known as "Nigger Lake." The

name allegedly began to become controversial in the mid-20th century when Washington bureaus began to refuse ice harvest contracts with that name on them. Again, according to Wikipedia, the lake was renamed “Lost Coon Lake” as a “compromise” in the 1980s when upscale developments began being targeted for the area.

Locals and visitors alike consider the name “Lost Coon Lake” extremely offensive, as its history and meaning are easily discovered by a Google search producing the Wikipedia information referenced above. A letter received by the Whitefish Convention and Visitor Bureau in 2015, attached hereto as Exhibit A, articulates the sentiments that have been expressed by individuals time and time again.

The City has been, and continues to be, committed to honoring and welcoming the diversity of all our citizens and visitors. Over the years, the City has strived to promote tolerance and inclusiveness and has approved two Resolutions, an Ordinance, and a Mayoral Proclamation to that end. As stated in Resolution No. 14-57:

The Whitefish City Council declares its support of Whitefish community values that recognize and celebrate the dignity, diversity, and inclusion of all of its inhabitants and visitors, and protect and safeguard the right and opportunity of all persons to exercise their civil rights, including the rights of free speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom from discrimination.

Loons returned to Lost Coon Lake after Whitefish Lake Golf Club, which owns property abutting the lake, purchased and launched a nesting platform to encourage their establishment. Prior to the nesting platform being placed in the lake, the loons used the lake as a casual feeding area. Whitefish Lake Golf Club has already started the transition of changing Lost Coon Lake’s name by referring to it as “Lost Loon Lake” on their golf course map and signage.

The requested name change would honor the requests of citizens and visitors and be in harmony with the City’s expressed values of promoting diversity, tolerance, and inclusiveness.

The requested name change would also be consistent with the name already used by many when referring to the lake.

The names of all persons or corporations owning real estate abutting upon or water rights to Lost Coon Lake are set forth in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein. The signatures of at least 10 owners of real property abutting Lost Coon Lake are contained in Exhibit C, attached hereto and incorporated herein.

Pursuant to § 85-2-132, MCA, the City, on behalf of the property owners identified in Exhibit C, hereby requests that: (1) the Court order that notice be published as designated by the Court; and (2) the Court fix a time at which objections to the granting of this Petition be heard.

Dated this 13th day of August, 2020.

CITY OF WHITEFISH

/s/ Angela K. Jacobs
Angela K. Jacobs
City Attorney
P.O. Box 158
Whitefish, MT 59937

EXHIBIT A

From: "Ryan Göllner" [REDACTED]
To: info@explorewhitefish.com
Sent: 4/16/2015 2:00:52 PM
Subject: Time to Re-Re-name Racist Lake in Whitefish
Hello,

My name is Ryan Göllner, and I am of German-Jewish-Irish descent. I have been happily married for many years with a lovely woman who happens to be black. We live a perfectly normal upper middle class life, and rarely run into the trouble generations before us may have had in their lives, as a result of their decision to marry outside of one's race. We recently moved our family to Missoula, Montana for work, and have not experienced any "racially related" trouble of any sort in the last 2 years we've called Montana home. And that's not surprising. Montana is filled with some of the nicest people we've ever met! And ...it's the year 2015. Most of us are kind of past that stuff.

Enter Whitefish. Despite publicly decrying the attempts of folks like Spencer to create an Aryan Mecca of sorts in the NW of our country, there is something I discovered today that appalled me. When looking at traveling up to Whitefish for some recreation, I honed in on a lake within city limits, in quite plain view, called "Lost Coon Lake".

Immediately my "racism receptors" went up, and I decided to do a brief historical search about the lake to learn of it's origin. The truth of this lake is actually shocking. The original name was in fact, "Nigger Lake", per Wikipedia, and several historical sites on the town of Whitefish. Auspicious as this is, though merely a reflection of the racism that was within the town in days past, the more alarming fact is that they decided to rename a lake originally called "Nigger Lake" to "Lost Coon Lake". Lost Coon??? Seriously?

Call me crazy, but perhaps it's time to issue an apology, and to consider a motion to rename this lake as well, before it brings more bad press to what I still firmly believe is an amazing part of the planet.

An organization such as yourselves seems perfectly poised to effect this change...Thoughts?

Respectfully,

Ryan

4/17/2015

Dear Ryan,

Thank you for taking the time to write your thoughtful and respectful letter. It has been a challenging time of late with some residents voicing beliefs in opposition to the tolerance that we promote and embrace in our community, and we appreciate your acknowledgement of the public decay of Mr. Spencer's attempts. We apologize that the lake is named as it is, and we will research the process for changing the name with a hope to put an end to the racist days of old. We were pleased to read your experiences in Montana have been positive thus far and we hope you will feel welcome and enjoy the many recreation options in and around Whitefish in the future. Thanks again for contacting us.

Sincerely,

Dylan

Dylan Boyle

Executive Director

Explore Whitefish

Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau

P.O. Box 4232

231 First Street, Suite G

Whitefish, Montana 59937

406.862.3390 office

406.599.7929 cell

dylan@explorewhitefish.com

www.explorewhitefish.com

EXHIBIT B

Elizabeth Saltonstall
335 Foster Lane
361 Foster Lane
Whitefish, MT 59937

Joel Lockwood & Gayle Fredericks
1380 S. Karrow Ave.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Joel Christiansen
1450 S. Karrow Ave.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Jeremy & Desirae Myers
1520 Karrow Ave.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Jeffrey K. Jensen Family Trust
101 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Michael & Marilyn Girard
315 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Bowman Living Trust
335 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Miriam & Kurt Lewis
367 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Rhett & Patricia Johnson
405 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Rex C. Short Revocable Trust
3 Tides Way
Whitefish, MT 59937

Koel & Lazette Abell
335 Lost Coon Trail
Whitefish, MT 59937

Todd & Anita Malone
315 Lost Coon Trail
Whitefish, MT 59937

Kurt & Mary Person
1400 S. Karrow Ave.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Donna Scholl Holmstul Trust
1484 Karrow Ave.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Gennaro & Maria Rosetti
1530 Karrow Ave.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Mark & Adrian Payne
295 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Kurt & Mary Person
325 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Christopher Werner
355 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Steven & Mellissa Kelly Revocable Trust
395 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Whitefish Lake Golf Club, Inc.
415 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937

Francis & Paula Sweeney
350 Lost Coon Trail
Whitefish, MT 59937

EXHIBIT C

Thomas Y. Bowman

Signature

Thomas Y. Bowman

Print Name

335 Blanchard Lake Dr

Address

Steven Kelly

Signature

STEVEN KELLY

Print Name

395 Blanchard Lake Dr

Address

Marilynn Girard

Signature

Marilynn Girard

Print Name

315 Blanchard Lake Dr.

Address

Jeremy Myers

Signature

Jeremy Myers

Print Name

1520 Karrow Ave

Address

Helen Weems

Signature

WEEMS, HELEN

Print Name

1450 Karrow Ave.

Address

John Holmsten

Signature

Print Name

1490 Karrow Ave

Address

Miriam Lewis

Signature

MIRIAM LEWIS

Print Name

367 Blanchard Lake Dr.

Address

Terry Nelson

Signature

Terry Nelson

Print Name

Whitefish Lake Golf Club, Inc.
415 Blanchard Lake Road

Address

Francis F. Sweeney

Signature

Francis F. Sweeney

Print Name

350 Lost Coon Trail

Address

Signature

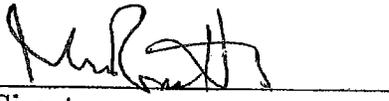
Print Name

Address


Signature

Joel Christiansen
Print Name

1450 Karrow Ave
Address


Signature

MARIA ROSETTI
Print Name

1530 Karrow Ave
Address


Signature

Anita M. Malone
Print Name

325 Foster Ln
Address

Signature

Print Name

Address